



## INSTEAD OF CREATIVE TAXATION, HOW ABOUT JOB CREATION?

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*[Publisher's Note: As part of an ongoing effort to bring original, thoughtful commentary to you here at the FlashReport, I am pleased to present this column from Board of Equalization Member Michelle Steel. - Flash]*

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A Democratic Member of the State Assembly recently withdrew a bill that would have placed an special tax on soda and other sweet drinks. The tax revenue would have been dedicated to fighting childhood obesity.

He cited Republican opposition to “any” taxes as the reason for suspending his efforts. A two-thirds vote is required for tax measures and he must have assumed he couldn’t get it.

No wonder. This proposed tax would have done nothing to balance the budget. It simply would have been one more effort to effect social policy through taxation, and it would have created more organizations dependent on the state tax revenue.

There is no shortage of unpleasantness in today’s society. I suppose an enterprising lawmaker could find any number of products to tax as a means of warding off said unpleasantness.

For example, there are reports of an increase in young people with hearing problems caused by their use of ear buds. The legislature could tax music downloads to pay for noise pollution awareness.

Young people get hurt riding skateboards. You could tax skateboard related items to pay for kinetic energy trauma awareness.

The point is that the list of societal concerns is long.

But we are already taxed to the gills. In fact, gills would be nice since most of California has found itself “underwater” with overdue bills and high unemployment.

Another Democratic Legislator has introduced legislation to allow local governments to pass their own taxes on virtually anything.

Imagine a local income tax, higher local sales taxes, and local excise taxes on everything from cigarettes to snack food!

One question rarely asked about these proposals is exactly how much of a person's income should belong to the government?

It already takes four and a half months of work for Californians to earn enough to pay their taxes. It takes an additional four months to pay off government overspending.

Too many in government are guilty of mission creep. Their constitutional obligation to serve the public welfare has expanded far, far, beyond what most anyone would believe to appropriate.

I realize Republicans sound as if they only know one tune. However, it is the one tune that we must dance to if we are to pull ourselves of the morass we call the state economy.

Much of my district is facing double-digit unemployment and no amount of new taxes is going to find my constituents a job. No amount of taxes is going to pay their rent or put food on their tables.

The Legislature could do all of California a big favor by doing what is necessary to create a better environment for job creation, and by taking a break from using their imaginations in less productive ways.

Historically, Californians have been known to have a free spirit. That spirit now lies shackled to an oppressive tax environment.

We are crushing the individual as much as industry. Those who have jobs have found themselves living hand to mouth in hopes that something will change.

I don't think they are looking to a soda tax for their salvation.